

NSC review completed

1 December 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Press Guidance for the U.S. Mission in Saigon

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"The NSC Staff with the concurrence of the Departments of State and Defense and CIA has requested that we transmit the following U.S. Mission press release for use if the prisoner exchange materializes: Begin text: The Communist side today released the following U.S. (and GVN) prisoners: (Give names). In exchange, our side released Communist prisoner(s). We hope this will lead to further release on both sides, although it is not certain that it will. As you know, the U.S. and GVN have proposed the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war. The GVN's good will on this subject was shown by the release of 2900 VC PW's which was announced November 1, 1971. We hope the other side will release more prisoners, U.S. as well as Vietnamese.

"The released prisoners are undergoing physical examinations. They will return to the U.S. to rejoin their families as soon as possible.

"Talking Points:

"Q. When you refer to an 'exchange,' how was this arranged?

"A. I have no additional information to give you.

"Q. Can you tell us where and when the exchange took place?

"A. No, I cannot. In the interest of all the prisoners we consider it necessary to hold this information in confidence.

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"Q. Does that mean you expect more exchange in this channel?

"A. As I said, we hope this will lead to further releases on both sides.

"Q. Can we talk to the released men?

"A. They are in the hands of the doctors at present. I cannot say when it will be possible for you to see them.

"Q. Is this exchange, or release, related to the release of Sgt. Sexton, who brought with him a note asking for the release of two Communist prisoners?

"A. As I said, I have no additional information on this subject, so I cannot comment on that question.

"Q. Who were the Communist prisoners released? How were they selected? Were they VC or NVA? Were they civilians or military? Where had they been held? Where are they now?

"A. As I said, I have no further details for you."